

A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

ALFRED WAYLAND CUTTING

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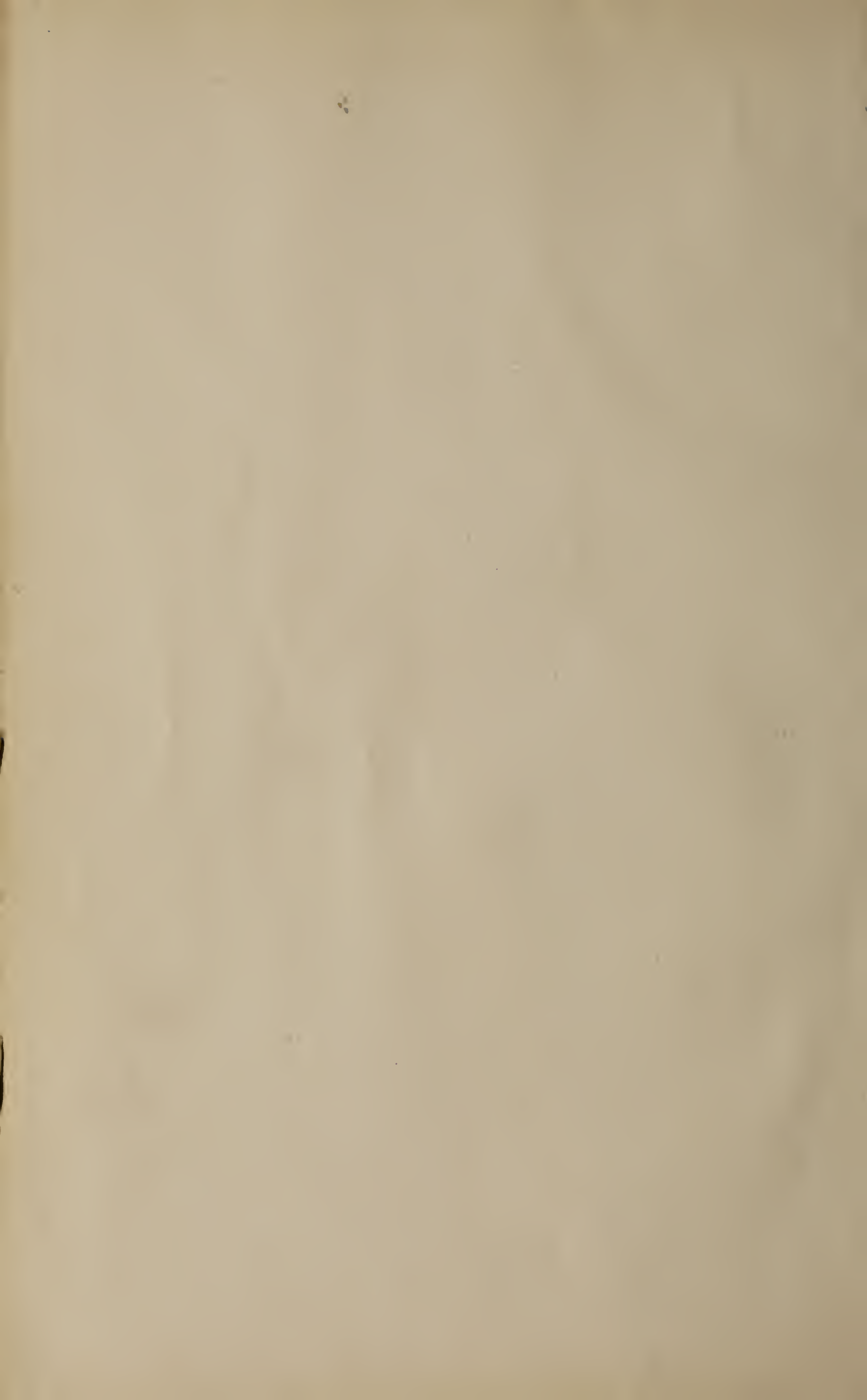
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A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

ALFRED WAYLAND CUTTING

IN THE

FIRST PARISH CHURCH, WAYLAND, MASS.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 24, 1915.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPLETION
AND DEDICATION OF THE PRESENT MEETING-HOUSE, JANUARY
25th, 1815, AND OF THE 275th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH IN 1640.



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The Old Meeting-House on Its Hundredth Birthday

Order of Exercises

LIGHTING OF CANDLES IN CHURCH

By an impersonation of a man of 1815

ENTRANCE OF OLD-TIME CHOIR

In ancient dress, and accompanied by musicians
with violin, cello, clarinet and double bass

ENTRANCE OF THE CLERGY

The present minister, and three former ministers

INVOCATION

Rev. Herbert H. Mott

HYMN—"Hark! hark! the Gospel Trumpet sounds!"

Sung to the tune of "Wayland"

Old-time choir

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS

Rev. Arthur W. Littlefield

HYMN

"How beautiful are their feet, who stand on Zion's hill"

Old-time Choir

PRAYER

Rev. Seth Curtis Beach, D.D.

HYMN—"Ye Christian Heralds, go proclaim Salvation through Emmanuel's name"

Sung as a four-part "round"

Old-time Choir

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Rev. Wm. H. Branigan

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

Mr. Alfred W. Cutting

MEMORIAL HYMN

Written for the occasion by Rev. Wm. H. Branigan,
Sung to the tune of "Old Hundred"

Choir and congregation

BENEDICTION

Memorial Hymn

*Written for the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Dedication of
the First Parish Church, Wayland, Mass.*

Our God, to thee our thanks we bring
That, through the changeful century gone,
Since first our fathers gathered here,
Thy love has led their children on.

Firm was the faith their stout hearts held;
With heavenly hope their lives were fraught;
And, by divine ideals inspired,
Fervent the will with which they wrought.

Such faith as theirs to us impart,
Such hope to cheer us on our way,
Such visions of the life to come,
Such zeal to work for thee today.

So, from the altars of the past,
Our lips touch with a living coal;
That we may worship thee anew,
Quickened in mind and heart and soul.

Tune, Old Hundred.

William H. Branigan.

Address

One hundred years ago tomorrow, the 25th of January 1815, was a memorable day to the citizens of the town of East Sudbury. The dedication of a new meeting house in those days was a matter of far greater interest than it would be now-a-days. It was then not the dedication of *a* new church in the town, but that of *the* church. The parish was an incorporate part of the town government and the meeting house was built by and for the town's people. Consequently the interest in it was that of general ownership.

This town ownership however, in the case of our church, was transferred in a measure to the proprietors of the pews, these being sold at auction, above a minimum price, and the large sum thus accruing used in defraying the cost of the building. Until 1833 however, the minister's salary, over and above the income from the ministerial fund, which was very small, was raised by taxation.

This new meeting house, within whose now venerable walls we are to-day gathered, was a child of many tears. Its predecessor, a bare, bleak, unpainted edifice standing on the town common, about where the post office now is, had served the town for nearly ninety years. A new building was necessary, and a split immediately opened in the church, involving consequently all the town, as to where the new church should stand. A majority of the citizens were in favor of tearing down the old meeting house on the common, which had been purchased as a site for the church in 1726, at command of a committee of the General Court, to which the matter had been referred, and building the new church upon the same spot, thus continuing the location which had been authorized by law and hallowed by many years of associations. This conservatism however, was combatted by an irreconcilable minority of, shall we call them progressives?—who had cast their eyes across the brook in the village, to the pleasant rising slope of William Wyman's pasture, where at the forking of two great roads, and facing the main street, they saw in their mind's eye an ideal site for the beautiful new building, the plans of which, drawn by Mr. Palmer the architect, were familiar to all.

We owe this fine situation to the fact that this minority worked indefatigably, in season and out of season, for seven

years to gain their object. At no less than thirty four meetings they maintained an unbroken front, and were rewarded at length by complete success, a unanimous vote of the town for the purchase of the Wyman lot being passed, and early in the spring of 1814 ground was broken for the new church. The building committee appointed by the town were: Major General Micah Maynard Rutter, chairman, and William Bridge, Luther Gleason, Nathaniel Reeves, Jr., and William Johnson.*

It is interesting to note that the Chairman of this Committee, General Rutter, was a lineal descendent of John Rutter, with whom the contract was made in 1642 for the building of the first log meeting house in the old grave-yard. The deed of pew number 8 in the old church to Elisha Cutting, still preserved, cites that these men were "Duly consituted and appointed the Agents of the said Town, to build for the accommodation of its inhabitants, an house for Public Worship, with authority to sell and grant deeds of the Pews therein, as by the Records of the Town Clerk will appear."

On June 1, 1814, all able bodied men of East Sudbury were notified that the frame of the church was ready for raising. It required no coercion on the town's part to get together abundance of brawn and muscle for the work. "Raising bees" were recognized functions in the community, and that of a public building constituted a gala occasion.† Not only the men, but the women were busy. Kettles were bubbling in all the nearby houses, tables were being spread in the open air, and the small boys were climbing over the great timbers lying yellow and new-hewn on the bare pasture slope.

*Rev. John Burt Wight, for nearly seventy years known in Wayland as "Parson Wight", although his actual ministry ended in 1835, was ordained and settled as pastor of the First Parish on the occasion commemorated. He died in Wayland in 1883 at the age of ninety three. Near the close of his life he wrote his "**Reminiscences**," which in manuscript form is preserved in the town library. In this paper Mr. Wight says, referring to the building of the church:

"An able committee was appointed, and a skilful, experienced builder obtained. A beautiul plan was adopted and the people were spirited and liberal in furnishing the requisite materials. The master workman was ambitious to surpass any similar building he had erected, and the result was a success very gratifying to the inhabitants, and highly praised in the adjacent towns."

†Mr. Wight states that this event of the raising was only one of several such gala days connected with the building. He mentions the laying of the foundations, the erection of the tower, the finishing of the interior and the raising of the bell as being celebrated in the same manner.

On the crest of the rise the cut granite blocks of the underpinning, already in place, bearing the great 12 x 12 sills and flooring, indicated the present lines so familiar to us. Chained by the great timbers, half a dozen yokes of oxen placidly chewed their cud. We can fancy the work as it goes on—the posts raised, studding and tie tenons dropped into the mortises with never a bind or hitch, all held finally by the wooden pins driven home, for not a nail was used in the framing—more timbers drawn up by two and three yokes of oxen and lifted into place, and finally the rafters joined and pinned, and the familiar proportions of our church, for the first time appear drawn against the sky. That the men made light of the labor can be judged by the action of my grandfather, then a lusty young fellow; who, after the ridge-pole was in place, seized it with both hands, and standing on his head, clapped his feet together in the air! It was a day of enthusiasm, but if feelings of weariness in well doing were felt, there was the pail of rum and water with its dipper, under the apple tree! For right or wrong, it is undeniable that the use of liquor was almost universal at this time, and custom demanded that the frame of a new building be “wet”.*

For six months after the raising, hammers and mallets, chisels and saws kept up a constant chorus. Modern architects and builders affirm that the builders did honest work, and that their only fault was over-conscientiousness, which made the unnecessarily heavy framing in some instances a source of weakness to itself. The shingles nailed on the tower and front porch in 1814 did service for one hundred years, and when removed in 1914 to be replaced by sheet copper, were, except for splitting and weathering, found to be perfectly sound.

Were we of today to visit the East Sudbury Village of 1815 we should see little that is familiar. Two buildings only remain that were standing then, the hotel and the little brick school house on the common, now Bigwood's stable. We must imagine a street of half its present width, with none of the trees we see today except the great elm over the watering trough

*Mr. Wight records—“This custom (liquor drinking) prevailed wherever people gathered together, at parties, ordinations, auctions, militia trainings, town meetings, ecclesiastical councils, weddings, births and funerals, even the children partaking. I have no recollection of being in any family, or at any party, during the early years of my ministry, when spirits and wine were not offered and universally partaken of, but I do not recollect ever seeing, on such occasions, any person intoxicated.

before the tavern. At the crossing of the brook less than half of the road was a bridge, the southerly side being an open "drive," the road passing through the water to afford an opportunity to swell wheels and to water cattle. In the old times all brook crossings were thus utilized, the last one remaining in Wayland being still used at Claypit brook. The tavern in 1815 was much smaller than it is now, resembling an old-time farmhouse, two storied in front, with a long sloping roof behind over the kitchen. It was painted a dull yellow in front and red in the rear. A large barn stood just to the west of it. Next to the tavern buildings where Millbrook road now begins, was an old red building used as a butcher's shop. Then came Silas Grout's blacksmith shop, in front of where the late Judge Mellen's house is now—beyond this, stood Mr. Grout's house, on the site of the town hall, a large square white house surrounded by tall poplars. This may be seen today, with the addition of an ell, as the present house of the Misses Heard on Old Sudbury road. Across the street from this, where the railroad station now stands, but close to the road, was the Old Red Store and post office, kept by Heard and Reeves and bearing the sign "W. I. and Dry Goods." The common extended from here to the Island Road, comprising about two acres. Here close to the road stood the weather beaten and shabby old church, beneath a large and spreading sycamore tree. A mounting block stood beside it, and at the rear was an enormous boulder, a contribution of the glacier that covered Wayland in past ages. Behind this was the little brick school house.

Where the old Judge Mellen law office now stands was the town pound, an enclosure for the reception of stray cows, sheep and pigs. The remains of one of these old pounds is visible today in Dr. Hubbard's place on the Old Connecticut Path, at the junction of the lane to Mr. Dwight's. The present State Road West did not then exist, but the new Island Road meandered across the fields until it came to an end at a bar-way in what is now Mr. Edmund Sear's grounds. This road had been built a few years before by the Heard family owning the Island, who in consequence had been made exempt from taxes for ten years. Samuel Russell's plain yellow double house, without blinds or fences, stood close to the road where our parsonage is now.

This brings us, in our survey of the village street of 1815,

back to the new church. If we in 1915, with our railroad, automobiles, telephones, state roads and electric light, think this picture of Wayland Centre of 1815 small and primitive,* a more startling contrast still, will be seen, by pushing back the clouds which cover the past, to the zero point of social attainment here, the time of the founding of our church in the wilderness of 1640. As this occasion is a commemoration, not only of the centennial of the meeting house, but of the 275th anniversary of this foundation, it is proper that such a glance be taken. This ground was covered, in a measure, in an address given in this church on another occasion, so that it need not be here repeated at any length.

The church of East Sudbury in 1815 had already a long and fruitful history of one hundred and seventy five years behind it. —Four meeting houses had preceded the new one, from the assembling of the settlers amid the stumps of their clearing, to found a church in 1640. Three of them stood in the graveyard on Old Sudbury Road, which for eighty five years was the nucleus of the first settlement and town of the Sudbury Plantation. The fourth meeting-house, built in 1686, followed the movement of the town centre to its present location, occasioned by a readjustment of this geographical centre on the division of the parish into two precincts in 1725, which eventually led to the division of Sudbury into two separate towns. As we look back over the succession of meeting houses, we see them reflecting plainly the development of the town from its primitive beginning. The increase of prosperity and resources was always marked by the erection of a better church. After the first two of these, which were mere log shelters with roofs thatched with meadow grass, the first having no floor but the earth, we can trace the continuity of the later three in almost visible form to the present. The third building, as has been stated, was moved physically to its new location on the old common in the present centre in 1725, and then being rebuilt, became the immediate predecessor of this church. As will be mentioned later, the old church was in 1815 rebuilt a second time, and stands today beside this present one, as the Bullard residence.

If the first thatched log church on the graveyard hillside was primitive almost to squalor, it was the best building in the

*By the census of 1810, East Sudbury had 824 inhabitants.

settlement. The first dwellings of the pioneers were such as we would not house animals in today. A certain glamour of romance has always colored these times and conditions, but there was no romance or poetry in the reality. Arrived in the unbroken, sombre pine forests of the Musketaquid valley, these people, with few implements and almost no available resources, coming as they did from the long inhabited and cultivated fields of England, with no knowledge of woodcraft or adaptation to frontier conditions, were met first by the necessity of shelter, and that immediately. Johnson, a contemporary, who visited the settlement at, or soon after this time, has lifted the veil which covers their experience. He says in his "Wonder-working Providence",—"They burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter under some hill-side, and casting aloft upon timber the soil for roof, they make a smoky fire against the earth at the highest side. They did not provide them houses, till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them. The first year's crop was so light they they were forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season."

Thus the history of Wayland appears in epitome, the history of the race, from the age of the troglodytes to the present: but with one important reservation. The growth of resources and marvellous development of two hundred and seventy five years has been only physical and social; the bright star of this people's moral, spiritual and intellectual light burst at once full-orbed on the scene of their future, and through these centuries has needed no increasing. They brought with them hearts, wills and brains which made temporary hardships contemptible, to be brushed aside unregarded, as their far-seeing eyes pierced the future, and their brave hearts leaped to the great and splendid work they knew they were called and chosen of God to do.

Our church before its mutilation in 1850, when it was largely reconstructed, must have been one of the most beautiful examples of perhaps the best period of American architecture. The architecture of this period, covering roughly the eighteenth century, had the distinctive character commonly and erroneously known as Colonial. It is plain to be seen that the Colonial period, at least in Massachusetts, had, and could have, no distinctive type. The Massachusetts Bay Colony ended with the surrender of its charter to Andros in 1686 and became a

royal province. Before this date only fifty years intervened since the first primitive settlements, and in this time the barest necessities of existence, at most comforts, were all that the colonists expected or were able to acquire. The houses of that period which have come down to us are invariably small simple buildings, built with no thought of elegance or luxury, constructed on purely utilitarian lines. —

During the later Provincial period and extending past the Revolution to about 1825, was the flowering time of early American architecture. The Greek types utilized by Palladio and adapted from him by Sir Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones in England in the seventeenth century, were eagerly used by American architects, of whom our Boston Bulfinch was one of the later exponents. The general increase in wealth and the great fortunes amassed during the Provincial period of course stimulated this, with the result that a distinctive style of architecture marked the time, of a sanity, dignity and purity unexcelled since. Curiously enough this period was succeeded by the blackest epoch of architectural achievement in American history. The fifty years following 1825 witnessed a lowering of architectural tastes and standards to an inconceivable extent. Then it was that the fine old Heppelwaites and Chippendales were sent up garret, to be superseded below by hair-cloth, rep and veneer;—when superb panelled walls and Greek mouldings were papered over, Palladian windows covered with lath and plaster, and perfectly proportioned exteriors defaced; when the John Hancock mansion in Boston was torn down to make room for the characterless ostentation which succeeded it, and when a Mansard roof was built on the old State House; an age of architectural sham and shameless insincerity. All this is the more surprising in view of the fact that this same period was the high water mark of American literary development.

This old church of ours, as it is today, is the combined product of the two periods I have mentioned. Designed and built in all the fine sincerity of the best period, it bears the ruthless mutilations of the hopeless decadency of 1850. Perhaps I may say that the present church is the product of three epochs, the third being indicated by the partially successful effort of 1898 to restore the interior to a measure of its old time beauty.

The church was fortunate in its architect. This was Mr. Andrews Palmer of Newburyport. Nowhere in New England did purer types of Provincial architecture obtain than in this beautiful old town, many of whose fine old houses still delight us, and Mr. Palmer was evidently thoroughly imbued with their spirit. Beyond his name and work, nothing has come down to us, but the last is sufficient to give us a full measure of his genius. The cost of the building was \$9,500. It probably could not be duplicated to-day for \$50,000.

The exterior of the church with two exceptions, remains exactly as drawn by Mr. Palmer in 1814. The clock was added in 1850, and at the same time the windows on the sides were changed to conform with the interior requirements. The ancient arrangement of windows can be seen now at the rear end of the building, on the outside, where the old frames have never been disturbed.

These side windows formerly had only the two upper sashes. The third or lower sash, was added after the removal of the galleries, lengthening the windows to this extent, and the lower windows, now in the vestry, were shortened one half by removing the upper sashes. This was decidedly an architectural improvement to the exterior appearance of the church.

The bell was cast by Paul Revere in 1814, during his lifetime, as is shown by the lettering it bears today.

The new church of course lacked its present setting of elm trees. These were set out in 1827, when the present village street was widened and planted as it now appears. This work was at the instigation of Deacon James Draper, to whom the town of Wayland owes most grateful memory—and whose portrait appropriately hangs in the vestry below. The horse sheds formerly bounded two sides of the church lot, double the present number, extending to Cochituate Road.

The interior, in 1850, was so changed as to completely obliterate its ancient character. Originally the whole space within its walls, with the exception of a vestibule, was one room, with the floor level with its three entrance doors. Entering the church we should have seen a lofty apartment with its pulpit before us, this same one we now see, except that it stood high on six slender fluted columns and was reached by gracefully winding stairs with rails, on either side. Behind it was the window, exactly as it is now, restored in 1898. On this

rear wall were eight other windows, making nine in all. The lower four of these, cut down to half their former height, now light the rear of the vestry. A gallery extended around three sides of the room, supported by fluted columns twelve feet high. These galleries were unusually wide, covering a large proportion of the floor pews, much like the galleries of our present-day theatres. The pews were the square pews, so-called, entered by a door from the aisles, with seats on three sides, so that nearly one half of the audience sat back to the minister. The seats were narrow and unpainted, and fitted with hinges, so that the close of a hymn was marked by a clattering of falling seats all over the church. Cushions were unknown.

A foreign gentleman passing a New England church heard this sound of falling seats and said to his companion, "Do your people applaud your minister during service?" The present pews were made out of the old ones, and the hinges are still in place, though now immovable. The woodwork was white, with mahogany trimmings.

The new church inaugurated two innovations in the town. It was the first meeting-house built to provide distinctive family pews, to be used as such. In its predecessors the sittings of the men and women were divided, there being the men's side and the women's side of the church. The children and servants, and earlier the slaves, had their places also, usually in the gallery, where they were kept in order by the tithing men. As late as 1782, as an allusion in the records indicates, this feature still continued. The second innovation was that of a town hall being provided for the secular affairs of the community. The present church is the first edifice used solely for religious purposes in this town. Upon its completion in 1815 the old church was sold to Luther Gleason and Jonathan Heard on the condition that they construct from the old material a building which should contain a hall for the use of the town for municipal purposes for thirty years. This contract was duly lived up to, and the hall exists today in the residence of Mrs. W. A. Bullard, formerly the Old Green Store.—This room was Wayland's first town hall.

But now what of the people who on that memorable day one hundred years ago assembled within these walls, for the first time, for the triple purpose of dedicating their new meeting house to the worship of God, and of ordaining to the minis-

try and settling as their pastor the young John Burt Wight? Of one thing we are convinced; if that January day was as cold as an average January day, their sitting on bare uncushioned seats in an unheated church, one without even a chimney, through a two hours service—the sermon preached on the occasion being preserved in printed form, so we can judge of this; we are convinced that they were a hardier lot than their descendants.* Their names, to an old time Waylander are as familiar as those of his own family—indeed they were almost one family; the words “Uncle”, “Aunt”, “Cousin”, could be used by nearly any of them in addressing another. Indeed “Aunt Lois”, “Uncle Abel”, “Uncle Richard” and even “Aunt Richard”, were used by everybody in town, relative or not. There were the Reeves, Squire Jacob the innkeeper, from the hill, Justice of the peace, town clerk and deacon; his nephew Nathaniel, Jr., and cousins Hervey, Sylvester, and Henry; the numberless Heards, Deacon Richard, Colonel David—the local magistrate, Abel, William, Newell, the postmaster for thirty eight years, and Horace, afterward sheriff; Colonel William Baldwin, Samuel Noyes the cabinet maker, whose honest and beautiful work today adorns many of our old houses, Johnny Bracket the cobbler, with his twelve children, Deacon Robert Cutting and his cousins John, Elisha, and Jesse, solid farmers; Timothy Allen, the tailor; the Grouts, Haywards; Bullards, Jotham and Joseph; Gleasons, Luther, Isaac, Reuben and Abel; the Bridges, William and Aaron, sons of the old minister; the Robys, Damons, Rices, Griffins, Russells, Johnsons; the great families of Shermans and Adamses and Moores from Sheep End; the Tylers, Parmenters, Wymans; Amos Abbott, who left his whole estate, valued at \$600, to the church; the Rutter family, headed by the stately old Major General, Micah Maynard; and the Drapers, the senior of whom, Deacon James, held that office in the church for forty three years, and is Wayland’s benefactor in so many ways that an especial paper should be written about him; and his son James Sumner, then a youth, who was to be his father’s worthy successor, and who was to transmit to yet another generation the same public spirit and civic usefulness.

On a Sunday morning, a hundred years ago, all these

*Mr. Wight relates that “Though it was a cold winter day, the house was thronged. The town furnished a bountiful feast to the members of the Council, and many hospitable tables were surrounded with guests.”



The Old-Time Choir

families, with no exceptions, would have thronged every road leading to the church, some of the children perhaps bare-foot, with their shoes and stockings in their hands, to be put on at the "Shoe-tree", at the entrance to the village. My father has described this and has spoken of an old-time worthy, one of the last of his class, who came on horseback, wearing a long blue cloak with three capes, and bringing his daughter, in her cloak and "punkin hood," seated on a pillion behind him. I think he was one of the Griffins, from the north part,—near the "Pock Pasture"; Possibly "Old Bear Griffin," who our Wayland play-wright has introduced to us so pleasantly, in a play written and acted recently.

We are favored today, on this occasion, by the apparent return of some of these good people, in the garb of their day, to their well-known places. Many of these old costumes are no strangers here; they have been here many times. We see among others the bonnet of a young woman, worn here to church 80 years ago, the Sunday she "came out bride," Our ancestors were a thrifty and saving generation, what they got they kept, and so their garments have come to us carefully preserved in the old chests, ready to make one more appearance in their once familiar places. Faithful to the past, these old time shadows have brought their wonted musical instruments with them. Which of them is the "base violin" for use of which they petitioned, in 1797?

The first organ was introduced in 1831. It is described as being a "Small second-hand organ with false wooden pipes in front, and having three stops. It was bought by subscription. The present organ was purchased in 1866 at a cost of \$1000.

Mindful of the frigid hours spent in the unheated meeting house, some of the shades of 1815 have prudently brought their foot stoves with them. They may be seen on the pulpit steps. Our old-time friends probably found our meetinghouse so much warmer today than in the old days, that they have not considered them necessary. There they are, the church furnace of 1815! Other than these, heat there was none until October 1828, when a subscription was raised for "the placing of a stove, or stoves, with funnels, in the public meeting house in East Sudbury." As a result two large wood-burning stoves were placed in the vestibule, with the funnels going through the church to the rear wall, where a chimney was built. My father has told me

that these stoves had lion's heads on the corners, which to him as a little boy were intensely fascinating and never forgotten.*

The present communion service was purchased in 1795. One piece of its predecessor, which consisted of a pewter tankard, four cups and baptismal basin, purchased in London in 1707, is still in the church. This piece, the baptismal basin, was given to Nabby Allen, the last child baptized from it, in 1795. It is 208 years old.

In 1850 it would appear that the decadence of the church from its old-time prosperity had begun, in that certainly a third or more of its seating capacity was reduced, in the reconstruction of that year. A desire for a parish room or vestry led to the building being made two storied, by the removal of the galleries and the construction of a new floor, eight feet above the original one. The gallery columns were sawed off flush with the old floor, where the stubs may be seen today. All the windows on the rear wall were lathed and plastered over, and the walls frescoed to represent imitation panels, pilasters, and alcoves, all in a dull slate color. The old white pulpit was relegated to the basement, and its slender supporting columns and winding stairs destroyed. A new pulpit of mahogany veneer was installed, behind which was placed a neat horse-hair covered sofa. Behind this was frescoed an imitation alcove some ten feet high, with a large cross apparently before it, casting its shadow behind on the apparently curved wall of the alcove; very well done, a complete deception. The white wood-work of the reconstructed pews was "grained" in imitation of hard wood. Incidentally this paint never dried in the forty eight years of its existence, and on a hot summer's day the congregation was in danger of either becoming fixtures of the building, or of being obliged to leave their clothes behind them, on rising. The outside of the church was painted, blinds and all, a uniform cheerful drab.

Whether aided by these depressing influences or not, the life of the old church, after the departure of Dr. Sears in 1865, reached a very low ebb. But the town itself was, at this period, in the same condition. Old families were

*Mr. Wight's manuscript says, "These stoves were in the form of square cubical pedestals surmounted with elegant urns. They were originally procured in Europe for the use of the West Church in Boston, but were found insufficient to heat a building of that size."

dying out fast and child life remarkably inconspicuous. It was rapidly becoming a town of old people and of dwindling energy.

But better times were in store. The opening of the rail-road in 1881 marked the beginning of Wayland's return to life. Young families, drawn at first perhaps by ancestral affiliations, and by the town's unquestioned beauty, now easily accessible, came to Wayland. Others attracted by the latter consideration followed. Chubby and rosy children once more bloomed like flowers every where. The town was transformed by this infusion of young blood. The tendency to degeneration of old-time homes into squalid tenements in the village was checked. Throughout the town, neglected farms and houses were reclaimed and made beautiful. And this healthy infusion has gone on to the present.

In this resuscitation the old church has shared. The loyalty to the church of the new comers is equal to that of those of longer affiliations. The concealed architectural beauties of the old meeting house were soon seen by people of action, with the result that in 1898 a restoration of many of its former interior features was made, as we see them today. The dismal drab color of the exterior was restored to its former beautiful white and green. The dull yellow dome of the tower was gilded. A fine new Howard clock a few years later replaced the irresponsible vagaries of the old one.

During the last two years extensive structural repairs have been made, steel framing replacing rotting timbers, mainly in the tower, where old shingles were replaced by permanent copper sheating. The cost of this, about \$3,000—was at once and cheerfully subscribed.

If the people who a hundred years ago today met to dedicate this house, were to return here on this centennial commemoration, we can feel sure that they would be satisfied with our stewardship of the trust they bequeathed us, and would feel that the present and the future of their beloved church, preserved and blessed of God for two hundred and seventy five years, is, in our keeping, in worthy and reverent hands.

Alfred Wayland Cutting

AN HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST PARISH CHURCH, WAYLAND, MASS.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1911

BY

ALFRED WAYLAND CUTTING

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF A MURAL TABLET
TO THE MEMORY OF FOUR FORMER PASTORS OF THE CHURCH

EDMOND BROWNE

1640-1678

JOSIAH BRIDGE, A.M.

1761-1801

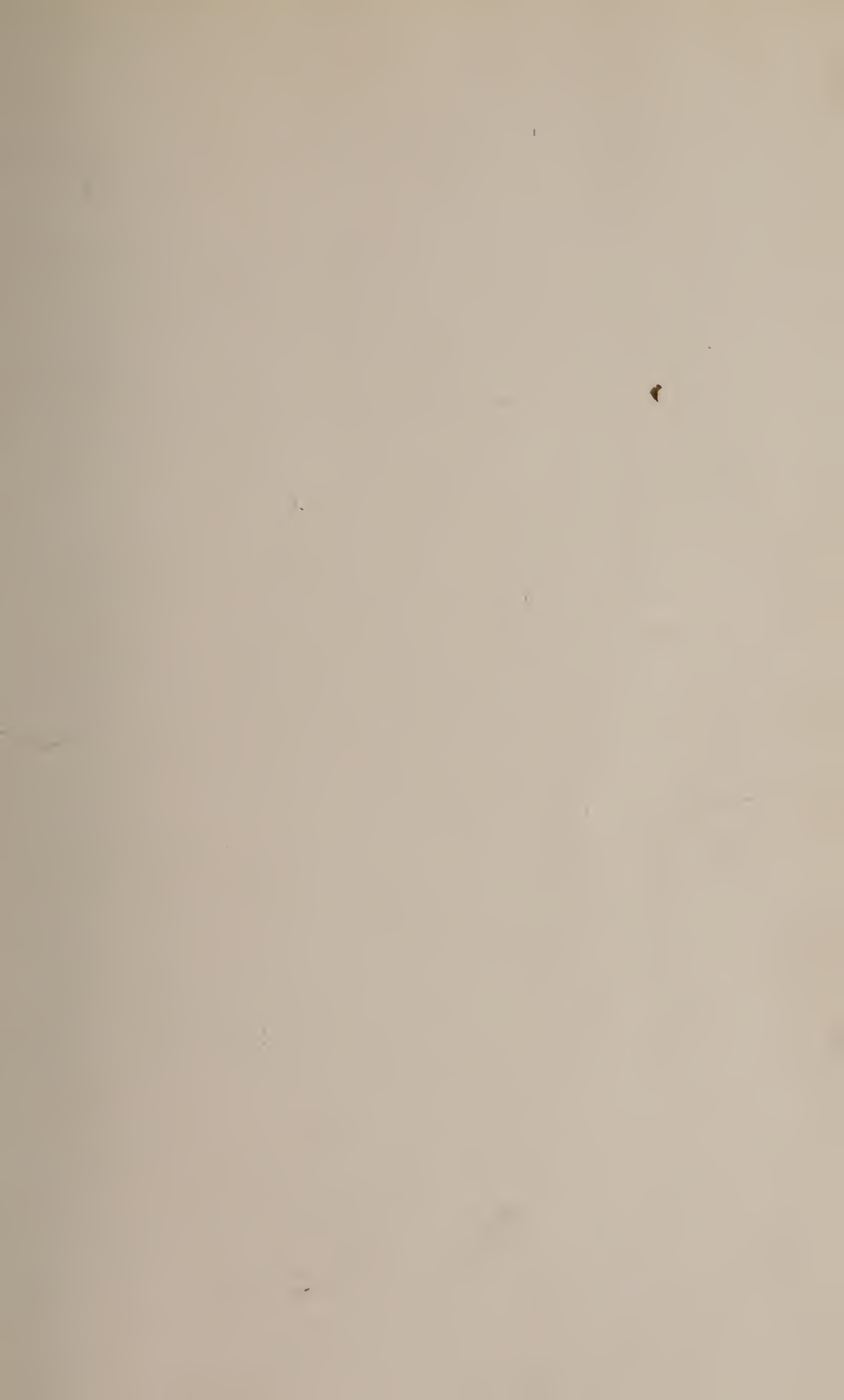
JOHN BURT WIGHT, A.M.

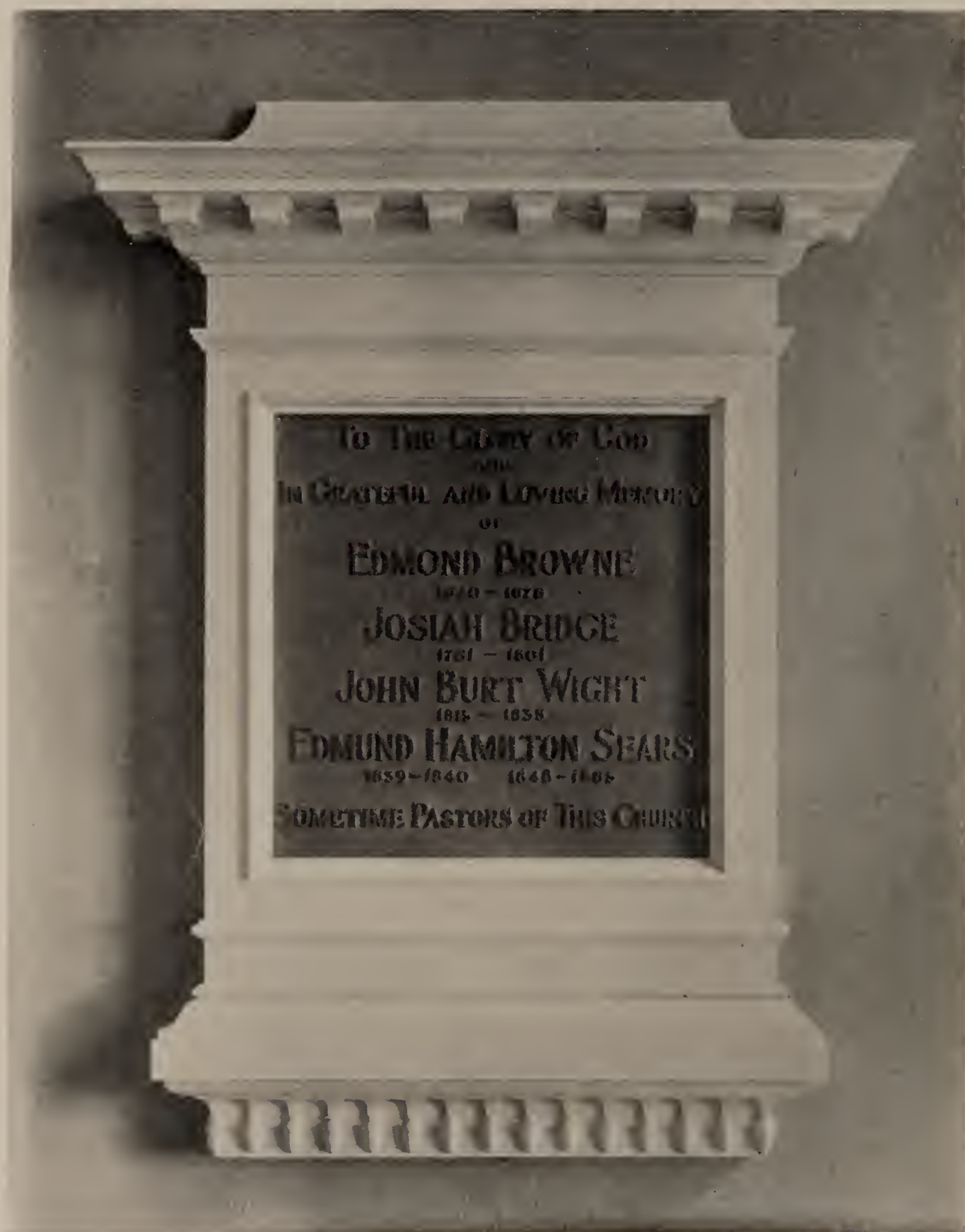
1815-1835

EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS, D.D.

1839-1840

1848-1865





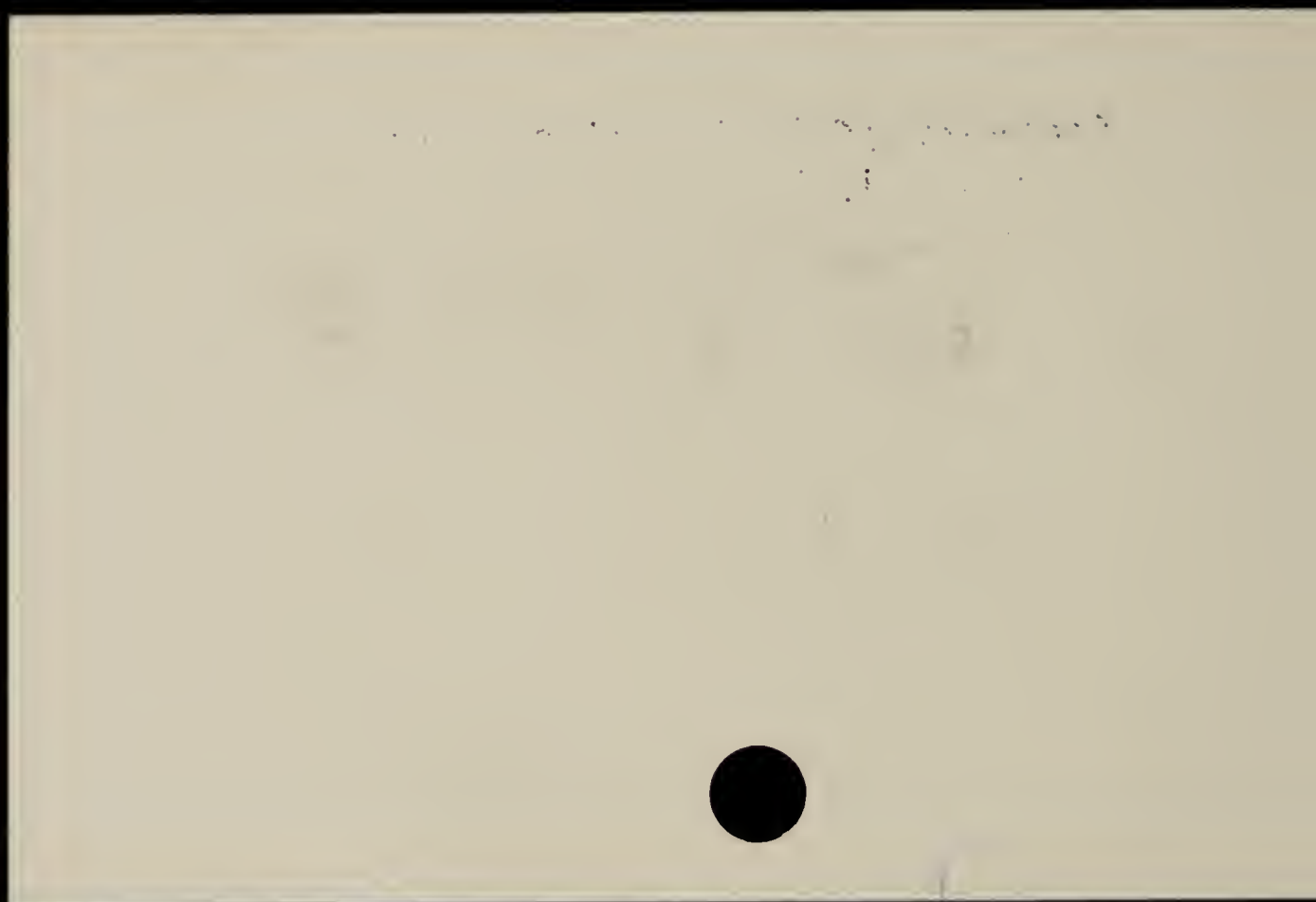
MEMORIAL TABLET

ARCHEOLOGY

930
Dis

Discovery of lost worlds / edited by
Joseph J. Thorndike. -- New York :
American Heritage Publishing Co., c1979

1. Civilization, Ancient 2. Archeology
I. Thorndike, Joseph J. II. American
Heritage



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BOSTON

PRESS OF GEO. H. ELLIS CO., PRINTERS

1911

Order of Exercises

SINGING

"Old Hundred" Hymn No. 5
"From all that dwell below the skies"

INVOCATION AND RESPONSES

First Service in Service Book

SINGING

"Gone are those great and good
Who here in peril stood"
Hymn No. 786

RESPONSIVE READING

107th Psalm

PRAYER

Rev. Seth Curtis Beach, D.D.

SINGING

"St. Ann's" Hymn No. 189
"O God, our help in ages past"

UNVEILING OF THE TABLET

By Master Edmund Hamilton Sears, Jr.
Great-grandson of Dr. Sears

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

Mr. Alfred Wayland Cutting

SINGING

"America" Hymn No. 784

BENEDICTION

Hymn

Gone are those great and good
Who here in peril stood
And raised their hymn:
Peace to the reverend dead!
The light, that on their head
The glorious past has shed,
Shall ne'er grow dim.

Ye temples, that to God
Rise where our fathers trod,
Guard well your trust,—
The faith that dared the sea,
The truth that made them free,
Their cherished purity,
Their garnered dust.

Thou high and holy One,
Whose care for sire and son
All nature fills:
While day shall break and close,
While night her crescent shows,
Oh, let thy light repose
On these our hills!

John Pierpont.

Prayer

BY THE REV. SETH CURTIS BEACH, D.D.

PASTOR OF FIRST PARISH

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity, we give thee hearty thanks for the good example of all those, thy servants, who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labors. In this hour of commemoration we thank thee for the "Great and good Who here in peril stood"—sometimes in peril and sometimes in peace—"And raised their hymn." We thank thee for the wisdom and courage which enabled our fathers to build better than they knew; we thank thee for their deliverance and ours from all dangers within and without, and for the growth, the comfort, the refinement, which have come to us as a blessed inheritance. We would remember before thee to-day a few of these worthies, all of whose names are written in the book of life,—men whom thou didst graciously raise up to lead the people in time of trial, to counsel them in days of peace. We bless thee for their patience in adversity, their soberness, their wisdom, their purity, their patriotism, their faith in thee. We thank thee that thou didst endow each of them in his time with large talents, enrich their minds with various learning exceptional in their day, endue them with insight, judgment, and persuasive speech, and fit them to be leaders in times which tried men's souls and which doubtless tried their own. As we look upon the prosperity and peace, the liberty and truth and justice, that so largely pervade the land, we see the fruit of the seed which these men planted, and we learn again the old lesson that great men, and especially good men, are thy best gift to the world; and we pray to thee that thou wilt now again give us men,—great men,

strong men, good men, fit to be our leaders, men who thoroughly know thy will and can teach it to us all. And now, our Father, what shall we ask more of thee, as we stand commemorating the great men of a noble past? What can we ask but that our own lives shall be doubly consecrated to our duties? In deeper purity, in more enduring unselfishness, in dauntless courage, in integrity that nothing can seduce, may we be wholly consecrated to thy service, and may we lay our humble lives, like strong, solid, though perchance unnoticed stones, in the structure of righteousness and truth and wisdom which thou art building in this community. To some such self-consecration may we all be uplifted by the service of commemoration which we hold to-day. *Amen.*

Address

The succession of the ministry of the First Parish of Wayland is a long and honorable list. During the two hundred and seventy-one years of the life of this ancient church, twenty-one names appear upon its records, of men who have served as its pastors, men who without exception, as God has given them the light to see it, have zealously and faithfully performed the duties of their high calling.

This in the olden time by constant study of the Bible as the one and only revelation of God and God's will; by reverent administration of the church's offices; by inculcating the noblest standards of life and well-doing; by their own lofty inspirations; and later by wider research and study, bringing before us the experiences and lessons of inspired lives of all ages, they have done.

The succession of ministers is as follows:—

PASTORS, FIRST CHURCH IN SUDBURY (WAYLAND)

Pastors previous to 1815:—

<i>Names</i>	<i>Settled</i>	<i>Resigned</i>
Edmond Browne	1640	died 1678
James Sherman	1678	1705
Israel Loring	1705	1722
William Cook	1722	died 1760
Josiah Bridge, A.M.	1761	died 1801
Joel Foster, A.M.	1802	died 1812

UNITARIAN PASTORS, FIRST PARISH, WAYLAND

<i>Names</i>	<i>Settled</i>	<i>Resigned</i>
John Burt Wight, A.M.	1815	1835
Richard T. Austin	1836	1838
Edmund Hamilton Sears, D.D.	1839	1840
George A. Williams	1844	1847
Edmund Hamilton Sears, D.D.	1848	1865
Samuel D. Robbins	1867	1873
James H. Collins	1873	1874
Edward J. Young	1876	1878
William J. Lloyd	1879	1880
William M. Salter	1881	1882
Nicholas P. Gilman	1882	1884
Herbert Henry Mott	1886	1889
Arthur W. Littlefield	1891	1892
Cyrus W. Heizer	1893	1901
Seth Curtis Beach, D.D.	1902	

The question which will naturally be asked on seeing this tablet which we dedicate to-day is, Why are these four names selected from this list for special commemoration? This question it is my duty to answer.

The list of ministers is a long one, but the length of service of each varies largely. Many pastorates have been brief. The Wayland parish is a small one, and the opportunities offered men of unusual talents or zeal are limited. Young men, fresh from the Divinity School, have been ordained and settled here, but, burning with youthful enthusiasm, have soon felt impatience at their limitations, and have left us for broader fields of opportunity. This church has thus been the nursery of much potential talent, which has later developed into shining lights of our denomination.

Of this list of ministers, ten have held pastorates of three years or less, three of from three to ten years, and the remaining eight were identified with the church and town in long pastorates of from seventeen to forty years.

The object of this tablet, as contemplated by its originators, is to commemorate these four men as representative types of the ministry of this church, as men who perhaps

more than others have not only left their mark on the parish, but as public-spirited citizens, as leaders in civic movements, and as men of strong powers of initiative and leadership, have been potent factors in the development of what is to-day best in Wayland.

Of the ministry of the olden times succeeding the first minister, Edmond Browne; the Rev. James Sherman, Israel Loring, William Cook, and Joel Foster, much is naturally lost in the lapse of years. Faithful and conscientious services the brief records of parish and town only tell of them, but the identification with the town and record of notable achievement and leadership so abundantly held by tradition and history in the cases of Edmond Browne and Josiah Bridge are, if they ever existed, obliterated by time.

The Rev. Israel Loring is perhaps an exception to this. After a pastorate of seventeen years, from 1705 to 1722, a petition from the inhabitants of that part of Sudbury lying west of the river having been presented to the General Court, praying that that part of the town be made the West Precinct, and a separate church be there established, Mr. Loring accepted a call from the new church to be its pastor, and removed to the new West Precinct, where he remained in that capacity for fifty years, dying in the ninetyeth year of his age in 1772, thus completing a pastorate in one town of sixty-seven years. On account of this longer affiliation with the west side Mr. Loring may be considered, from a modern standpoint, as a Sudbury rather than a Wayland minister.

The wording of the petition for a division of the town into two parishes is curious and worthy of repetition here, as affording a glimpse of the life of the times:—

Petition of the West Side people of Sudbury to Governor Dudley and the General Assembly:—

The petition of us who are the subscribers living on ye west side of Sudbury great River Humbly showeth that whereas ye All wise and ever Ruling providence of ye great God, Lord of Heaven and Earth who is God blessed forever moore, hath cast our lott to fall on that side of the River by Reason of the flud of watere, which for a very great part of the year doth very much incomode us and often by extremity of water

and terrible and violent winds, and a great part of the winter by ice, as it is at this present, so that wee are shut up and cannot come forth, and many times when wee doe atempt to git over our flud, we are forced for to seek our spiritual good with the peril of our lives.

A sketch of the lives of the four men commemorated by this tablet is largely a history of the town, covering as they do some hundred and twenty years of its existence.

Our town was founded in the wilderness in 1638, as the Sudbury Plantation. It was bounded on the east by Watertown, which extended west to the present Weston line, on the north by Concord, and on the south and west by the wilderness, or unclaimed lands of the colony. The town remained as a political unit for one hundred and forty-two years as Sudbury. In 1780 that portion of the town on the east side of the river, the site of the first settlement, was set apart as a separate town under the name of East Sudbury. In 1835 this name was changed to Wayland.

An erroneous idea has persistently prevailed that this town was named in honor of President Francis Wayland, of Brown University, as a benefactor of its library. That this was not so will be seen in the fact that Dr. Wayland's gift to the library was not made until 1847, or twelve years after the naming of the town. Other names considered at this time were Wadsworth, Clarence, Penrose, Fayette, Waybridge, Elba, La Grange, Auburn.

For the beginning of this ancient church we must go back to the unbroken wilderness, untrodden by the foot of the white man, its air unpolluted by the smoke of his chimneys. This wilderness was thinly fringed on the east by the tide-water settlements of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the most westerly of which, Watertown, had been settled a few years previously by Sir Richard Saltonstall and his company.

As this settlement at the falls of the Charles grew, and, as the records say, "We were straightened for room," adventurous pioneers pushed out into the western wilderness. William Wood, who explored it in 1633, gives the first published description of the beautiful Musketahquid Valley, with its thousands of acres of level meadows lying low amid

its surrounding primeval forests. Ancient Indian paths led through these vast forests, which, as Johnson tells us in his "Wonder Working Providence," "Are free from any underbrush, the trees planted as in a gentleman's park, through which a man may on horseback ride in any direction." An Indian trail from Watertown, the "Old Bay Path," to western Massachusetts was doubtless followed by the pioneers. This path at the present boundary between Weston and Wayland divided, the "Old Connecticut Path" going southerly over the northern front of Reeve's Hill, and the "Bay Path," now Plain Road, Bow Road, and Old Sudbury Road in Wayland, leading westerly to the river at the stone bridge.

The bound stone on the present State Road marking the division between Weston and Wayland is of interest, as it marks the forking of the prehistoric Indian paths, and it was this forking which, doubtless, determined the division line between Watertown and Sudbury at this point. The present eastern boundary of Wayland is a straight line some six miles in length, running due north and south, and is identical with the old Watertown bound of 1638. To the pioneers passing over the Old Bay Path from Boston, this place of this forking of the roads would naturally be a well-known landmark on an otherwise featureless trail through the forest, and as such would be taken as the point of division of the towns. If it would seem that the Watertown people set the line well to the west, we must remember that the western boundary of Sudbury was, to all intents and purposes, the Pacific Ocean!

The crossing of the river at the present stone bridge was determined by the fact that the river here crosses the meadows from shore to shore, which feature was utilized as a ferry in prehistoric times, and even after the advent of the settlers it was so used for some years. In the town records we find the appointment of Thomas Noyes as ferryman here in 1642.

A bridge and causeway soon followed. The Colony Records, Vol. II., page 102, show that in 1645 it was ordered:—

That £20 be allowed ye town of Sudbury toward ye building of their bridge and way at ye end of it, to be paid y^m when they shall have made ye way passable for loaden horses so it be done within a twelve months.

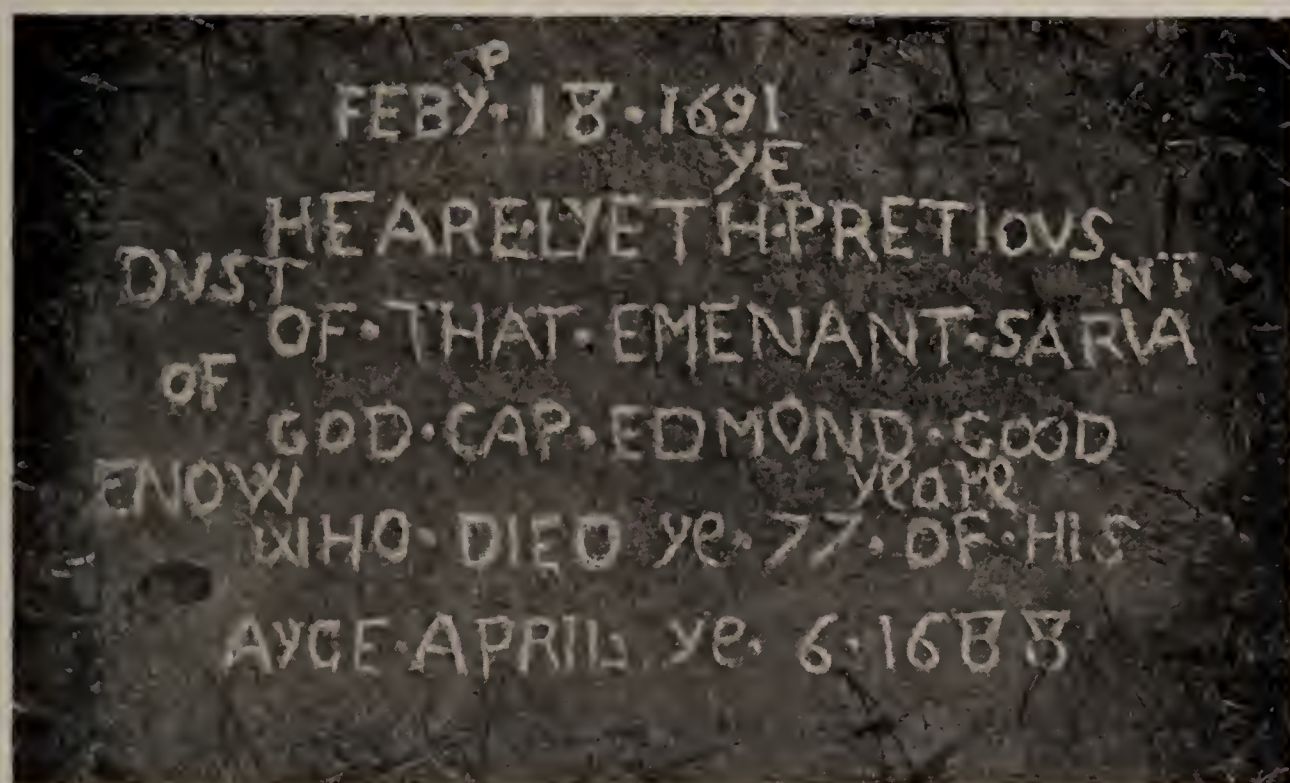
Stakes were early used to define the causeway across the meadow in time of flood, and later the town appointed a committee to set out a "sufficient number of willows" on the causeway for this purpose.

Here, then, on the Old Sudbury Road, on the easterly side of the river, facing the south, with rising ground on the north covered with forest and open to the wide meadows in front, in 1638 was built the row of thatched cabins of the first settlers. The land in front was at first worked in common, on a purely communistic basis, but this was only a temporary expedient. Here in 1642 was built the first meeting-house, and here, following the old English custom, about the church the dead were buried, forming the present ancient graveyard.⁽¹⁾ A bronze tablet on a boulder * now marks the site of the first meeting-house, and the heart of the settlement; long abandoned as such, and the spot is now but a quiet old graveyard on a tree-shaded road, half a mile from the village centre.

The town records, page 27, show the contract with John Rutter, dated Feb. 17, 1642, for the building of this meeting-house,—not *church*, it will be noted. This was to be "30 foot long, 20 foot wide, and 8 foot stud, with 6 windows, two with 4 lights, and four with 3 lights." The roof was of thatch, and the building had neither floor nor seats for two years, our hardy forbears deeming themselves fortunate in having a shelter from the wind and storm. It was further ordered that "Every inhabitant that hath a house lot shall attend the raising of the frame, or send a sufficient man."

From this humble beginning of our church we may perhaps here best trace the succession of its five meeting-houses down to this of our day. A second church was built on the same spot in 1652, which was forty by twenty feet square, thatched, and with the walls filled with "tem-

* The gift in 1896 of the late Dr. Frank W. Draper.



GRAVE OF EDMOND GOODENOW

The grave of Captain Edmond Goodenow in the old graveyard, beside the site of the first church. A contemporary and friend of Edmond Browne. The stone is placed flat on the ground, as are all the oldest stones here.

Edmond Goodenow was one of the pioneers and first settlers of the Sudbury Plantation, coming from Dunhead, Wiltshire, in 1638, at the age of twenty-seven, with his wife Anne, four children, and servant. He was one of the most active and prominent men of the settlement.

pered clay." It was voted by the town that the "Back side of the meeting house be finished as a Watch Tower." After King Philip's War this building was fortified by the addition of a palisade around it.

In 1686 a third church was built near the same spot. By the contract, provision was made for the storing of the town's supply of powder. The builders were instructed to copy the Dedham church. This building was probably a great advance on its predecessors. A bell was installed for the first time, the congregation before this having been summoned by the beating of a drum. On the town records for 1652 we find a contract with John Goodnow to beat the drum "twice every Sunday and for services on Lecture Day."

Civil and ecclesiastical authority being so closely allied, we are not surprised to find the town stocks, as a means of punishment, before the church. Further reference to the town records shows that in 1681 "Samuel Howe was to build a new pair of stocks and set them up before the meeting house."

By vote of the town in 1725 this building, the third in succession, was taken down and the timbers used in the construction of the fourth church, which was built in the present middle of the town, on the old "Common." This was used until 1815 when the present church was built.

So in this little nick in the wilderness, this second settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony beyond tidewater to the west, in this tiny clearing in the giant pines of the Musketahquid valley, was founded in 1640 the "Church and Congregation in Sudbury." After two years spent in clearing forest and erecting houses, in transporting everything necessary to existence except wood, water, and game, painfully and with toil, on foot or by pack-horse through the narrow Indian trail from Boston, the next care of these transplanted Englishmen was the formation of a church, free from the ecclesiastical diction of king or bishop. Seated in council, perhaps amid the stumps of the clearing, under the open sky,—for no other place of public gathering yet

existed,—with the blue crest of old Nobscot across the meadows as a witness, axes and saws and spades laid aside, the hardy freemen of the plantation met, and then and there founded this old church.

The minister chosen was one of their number, a pioneer and a farmer, toiling with all, asking no privileges or distinction beyond the rest, in the prime of life and strength of lusty manhood,—for only such as he could endure the conditions of existence then; a man who for thirty-eight years was to be not only their spiritual leader, but neighbor, fellow-worker, town officer, and trusted and experienced counsellor in all affairs affecting the public weal.

This man, Mr. Edmond Browne, as he is invariably called in the town records, as the title of Reverend was not used for a hundred years later, was a native of Sudbury, near Bury St. Albans, in Suffolk, England, from whence he had come in 1637 with a number of his townsmen and others, to found in the American wilderness a new Sudbury, freed from the tyranny, the wrongs, and the injustices of the old.

Cotton Mather states that Mr. Browne had been ordained and in actual service before his immigration, but beyond that and a commendatory reference to him as pastor by Johnson, couched in the usual ecclesiastical verbiage of the time, contemporary records give no intimation of his being other than one of the pioneers who had thrown their lot together. He was one of the largest land-owners in the settlement, his holdings reaching some three hundred acres, certainly an active farmer, and prominent in all plans for the betterment and development of the young town.

His house stood on what was then known as "Timber Neck," a short distance from the present Island Road, on the opposite side of the brook, beyond the bridge entrance to the land of Mr. Edwin F. Greene. Recent excavation here has revealed fragments of bricks, doubtless remains of the old Browne garrison, which have been reverently preserved by Mr. Greene. In Parson Browne's will his house is called "Brunswick." It was the most outlying house in the early settlement, but was accessible to the then

village centre by the old Bridle Point road over Braman's hill, a bit of which can still be seen between the houses of Mr. Hastings and the Misses Heard.² The present road to Wayland centre from Bow Road, and the present centre itself, were for many years later only swampy forest.

The name of Edmond Browne constantly appears in the early town records as leader in every civic movement, indicating a personality of great energy and far-sighted sagacity. He was a man of culture and refinement, fond of music and a skilled performer on several instruments, his "bass Voyall, musical books and other instruments" being mentioned in his will. He possessed what at that time and under existing circumstances was a remarkable library of one hundred and eighty volumes. His lifelong energy and business thrift brought prosperity, and at his death he made a bequest to the town for the establishment of a grammar school, and initiated a modern custom of millionaires by leaving £100 to Harvard College. He left no children, but provided liberally for his "deare and loving wife Anne."

His pastoral duties in the little thatched church on the hillside consumed but a portion of his boundless energy. The civilization and Christianizing of the Indians was a subject to which he gave much time and attention in co-operation with his friend and neighbor, John Eliot, of Natick. He was an indefatigable hunter, at a time when the region swarmed with game and dangerous beasts, of which wolves and bears were especially feared. His guns and "fishing craft" are duly bequeathed in his will. Wolves at this time constituted such a menace that a bounty of ten shillings for each one killed was voted by the town. Beaver pelts were an article of merchandise throughout the Musketahquid country.

Whatever trials and hardships the Sudbury settlers had to endure, danger from Indians of the neighborhood never entered. There were but few of them hereabouts at the time of the advent of the white man. Karto, afterward known as "Goodman," had his lodges on the hill across

the river, which now bears his name. This was the Indian with whom the Englishmen went through the farce of obtaining a deed of the township. He was a friend of Edmond Browne, and attended his preaching. Tantamous had his wigwams on Nobscot. Nataous had his lodge on Reeve's Hill, Tahattawam at Concord. It was not until forty years after the settlement of Sudbury that the horrible cloud of King Philip's descent on the English settlements of the entire colony fell over the town, and then for fifty years, in common with other frontier towns, Sudbury was to know neither peace nor security. May not Browne's wisdom and moderation in dealing with his Indian neighbors have been instrumental in securing the previous immunity? These Indians fought on the side of the white men in the invasion, and one was killed.

But, if Mr. Browne was gentle and pacific in time of peace, he was the man for the hour in time of war. At the descent of Philip and his hordes on Sudbury, he, then eighty years of age, appears to have been one of the most energetic and far-sighted. Letter after letter addressed by him to the authorities at Boston, urging preparation and defence, are on file. He protested against the impressment of Sudbury men for duty elsewhere, stating that they had but eighty fighting men available, and these were necessary for the defence of the town, as a descent upon Sudbury was impending and inevitable. The usual procrastination on the part of the colony authorities followed, with the result of the annihilation of Captain Wadsworth and his company of fifty men on Green Hill, April 21, 1676, the death of thirteen other men, and the burning of deserted houses and slaughter of live stock throughout the town the same day, when the women and children were crowded into the garrison houses.

Captain Wadsworth, of Milton, and his company had been despatched from Boston the day before for the relief of Marlboro. They had marched all day, reaching their destination at night-fall. Here they learned of the danger of Sudbury, and without stopping for rest or sleep, and

re-enforced by Captain Brocklebank, the commander at Marlboro, and a portion of his garrison, at once started back on a night march for Sudbury. There the next morning they were drawn into ambush by the Indians, only twelve men escaping death or capture.

As recorded, the only fortified house on the East Side was that of Edmond Browne. On September 26 of the previous year he had written thus to the Governor at Boston:—

I have been at a round charge to fortify my house, and excepting finishing the two flankers and my gate, have done. Now without four hands I cannot well secure it, and if for want of hands I am beaten out, it will be very advantageous for the enemy and a thorn to the town.

What this fortified house was to the East Side inhabitants on the day of the massacre we can imagine. Besides the calamity to Wadsworth's company, "Twelve resolute young men of Concord," hastening to the relief of Sudbury, were all but one slain by the Indians on the meadows⁽³⁾, while the Haynes garrison house on the west edge of the meadows, crowded with humanity, held off hundreds of savages, as the old account says,—

From between five and six of ye clock in ye morning, till about one in ye afternoon, when we forced ye enemy with considerable slaughter to draw off.

The English loss here was two men killed. On the East Side the men, re-enforced by a company from Watertown under command of Captain Hugh Mason, firing from behind buildings and trees, drove two hundred Indians in a running fight across the causeway, where, the meadows being flooded, this front was easily defended. ⁽⁴⁾

After the experiences of this day the meeting-house was fortified, as has been stated, but Sudbury was never again attacked in force.

In the death of Edmond Browne, June 22, 1678, the town met a great loss. It is true he was an old man, but, judging from his activity in the Indian War, he was still hale and robust. Moreover, he had been with the people

3 - See notes

4 - " "

since the beginning of the settlement. He had been a sharer in their joys and sorrows for forty years, and in his death they must have seen the closing of an epoch in the history of the town.

If Mr. Edmond Browne was a type of the New England minister of the time of the settlement and of the old Indian wars, the Rev. Josiah Bridge will well stand as a representative of the ministry of the time of the American Revolution. Ordained and settled as the fifth pastor of the First Parish in 1761, his pastorate covered the entire period of the Revolution until his death in 1801, thus giving his whole active life to the service of one church and one community, at the most critical period of our country's history.

During the interim between the death of the first minister and the settlement of Mr. Bridge, James Sherman and Israel Loring had held comparatively short pastorates for those days, and William Cook had had a long and honorable but apparently uneventful ministry of thirty-eight years.

Josiah Bridge was a native of Lexington and a graduate of Harvard College in 1758, subsequently receiving the degree of Master of Arts. The communistic features of society made necessary in the early days of the town had long since passed away, and at this time the nature of the pastoral office was much changed. Instead of being a sharer in the common toil and a minister in addition to being a participant in the necessary struggle for existence, the ministerial office was now invested with the utmost dignity, exacting and expecting respect and almost homage. The ministerial dress, manner, and bearing were distinctive, indicating the pastor as a man set apart from worldly affairs, a man of God.

No man was ever better fitted by nature and tempera-

ment for this character than Josiah Bridge. We must imagine a man of unusual physique, large, but well proportioned, almost majestic in mien and carriage, a countenance fresh and benign, with an eye that seems to read one's soul's thoughts,—clothe this form in a long-skirted coat of black velvet, with close fitting small-clothes, silk stockings, and silver shoe buckles, a three-cornered hat, and powdered hair tied with a black ribbon, and we have a picture of the typical pastor of the Revolution, Josiah Bridge, as he has been described.

This, however, was only the external man. Strong, virile, aggressive, but with these qualities tempered by good judgment and a kindly, sympathetic spirit, he won the hearts of all, and not only was the idol of his people, but a well-known and widely sought man in a larger field. As preacher before the State Convention of Ministers, an august assembly in those days, as preacher of the Annual Election sermon before the civil authorities in Boston, and as Dudleian Lecturer at Harvard College, he was a well-known man. Settled in Sudbury over this church at the age of twenty-two, he was ever loyal to it, though widely sought elsewhere.

He married Martha, the only child of the Rev. Aaron Smith, of Marlborough, by which he was richly blessed in the companionship of one who is said to have been one of the loveliest spirits that ever dwelt on earth, and founded a family which long and honorably continued his name in this town. His wife is never mentioned in the records of the time to which I have had access save as "Madam Bridge," indicating, it would seem, the deep respect with which the lady was regarded. The Old Bridge Parsonage still exists as the home of Mr. Alden D. Wellington, a four-square, dignified, old-time homestead, standing beneath its noble elms, very suggestive of the dignity and courtliness of its old-time life.

Here it was that on the 19th of April, 1775, Mr. Bridge was awakened at half-past three in the morning by the ringing of the church bell and by the firing of guns on the

Common, which followed the arrival of a dust and sweat covered horse and rider from Concord, bearing the tidings that the British, the "Ministerial troops," as they were called, were coming, and that the minute-men were ordered out. The scene that followed has been described by an eye-witness. We can imagine the gathering of the entire town, the falling in of the line of strong, grim-mouthed men beside the old church, the incessant crashing of the bell overhead, the rolling of drums, the hoarse shouts of Sergeant Robert Cutting and Sergeant Nathaniel Reeves calling the rolls, the excited arrivals of citizens from all directions. Through the open church door we see the burly form of Mr. Bridge in consultation with Captain Joseph Smith, Captain Nathaniel Cudworth, and the town officers. Before the church stand quietly the group of twenty-one horses of Isaac Loker's little troop. Soon all is ready, and we see one hundred and thirty-six men swing into column, shoulder their flintlocks, and start off up the Concord road. Thus in our town began the War of the Revolution.

These men were not, as is usually the case at such times, composed of the rabble and irresponsible element of the town. An examination of the muster-rolls shows a list of the most prominent and respected citizens. An example of this is Israel Haynes, of Sudbury, shot dead at Lexington, who was eighty years of age and a deacon of the west side church.

Throughout the stormy period of the Revolution, and in the worse times of political confusion which followed, Mr. Bridge's excellent judgment and counsel were ever employed in the service of the town. On the old Training Field⁵, where hundreds of Sudbury men were drilled and prepared for duty and in the councils of citizens and officers in the church, the only town hall, Mr. Bridge's familar figure was often seen.

This church, so closely associated with the events of the time, deserves description. Thirty-five years before Mr. Bridge's pastorate began, the third meeting-house, built in the graveyard on the Old Sudbury Road, had been removed and rebuilt on an acre of land purchased for the

purpose in the present centre of the town, about where the post-office now stands. This land, known as the "Common," contained besides the church, the town pound, and at the southerly end a brick school-house, still standing. ⁽⁶⁾ The meeting-house, a large, square, weather-beaten building, without tower or chimney, resembling the "Old Ship" at Hingham, stood close to the road, a large sycamore shading its pulpit window. A horse-block by one of its doors—it had entrances on three sides—was used by the parishioners, who, coming to church on horseback, often with a pillion behind for wife or daughter, could here easily mount or dismount. Inside, the square pews, with high partitions surrounded by little balusters, the seats for the austere-looking deacons beneath the high pulpit, with its mighty overhanging sounding-board,—these all, with the massive galleries, constitute the picture of this old church, whose frame still survives in the house of Mr. W. A. Bullard, standing beside its successor, the present church, where it was removed in 1815. ⁽⁷⁾

One of Mr. Bridge's most valuable contributions to this town has never been properly recognized by local historians. To him is largely, if not wholly, due the initiative in the establishment of a library in the town. In 1796, years before the thought or possibility of a public library supported by the town, Mr. Bridge, actuated by the reasons given in the preamble of its constitution, was the leader in the establishment of the "East Sudbury Social Library." This preamble, doubtless inspired, if not written by Mr. Bridge, is as follows:—

Fully convinced that Public as well as private happiness essentially depends on the General diffusion of usefull knowledge, and that the easiest and most direct way to obtain that knowledge is by the free use of well chosen books, we the subscribers do therefore agree to purchase and keep for our use and benefit, a social circulating library, and hereby obligate ourselves to abide by the following articles as constitutional for this Society.

These by-laws make us smile now, as when we read that a book might be kept out for three months, but must be

6- See notes

7- " "

returned before three o'clock on the day due on penalty of a fine of thirty-three cents, or when we read that the librarian's salary was to be two dollars a year; but we must remember that this was the beginning of the development of the free public library idea, and that these people were tentatively working it out. That this development was persistently carried to a noble length is a matter of the history of Wayland, and the part acted in it by a successor of Mr. Bridge, the Rev. John Burt Wight, will be shown.

By the carefully kept records of this old library association, now preserved in the town library, we find evidence of Mr. Bridge's interest and activity in the facts of his continued chairmanship of the board of directors and that he personally chose and purchased all the books as long as he lived. The organization lasted for fifty years, when it was merged into the Public Library of the town.

The sudden death of Mr. Bridge in 1801, at the age of sixty-two, was a sad blow to church and community. A tower of strength had fallen. The "Beloved pastor" was no idle figure of speech in his case. As we read, his people had been proud of him, loved him, honored him. He had bidden God-speed to the hundreds of soldiers of Sudbury departing for the battlefields of the Revolution, and had welcomed them returning to lay down the victorious arms with which they had made a nation. He had comforted the sorrows and shared the joys of two generations. His counsel had cheered them and his wisdom dispelled their clouds of perplexity. His manly nature had never known doubt, and the bright light of his spirit had illumined all.

His stately old gravestone in the North Cemetery expresses this in the following words:—

IN MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOSIAH BRIDGE, A.M.
THE ABLE, FAITHFUL, PIOUS,
MUCH BELOVED, AND GREATLY LAMENTED
PASTOR
OF THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
IN EAST SUDBURY.

Three notable events were combined in one on the 25th of January, 1815, when this church in which we are to-day gathered was dedicated forever to the service and worship of God. On the head of a young man were laid the hands of consecration ordaining him in the Christian ministry as a priest of God; and as such he for the first time pronounced his benediction over the bowed heads of the people as their pastor, the seventh in succession of this church.

The man was John Burt Wight, a native of Bristol, Rhode Island. He had graduated from Brown University at the head of his class in 1808, and had later studied at the Harvard Divinity School, which college some years after conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts.

He is thus described by a contemporary:—

A man of amiable disposition, of meek and quiet temper, and truly catholic spirit. He was a good representative of the best type of New England character. His figure was erect, his bearing noble and dignified, and his manner kindly and courteous.

Twenty-five years of age at his ordination, Mr. Wight was to be identified with this town as a useful and honored citizen for sixty-eight years, until his death in 1883 at the age of ninety-three.

After the death of Mr. Bridge in 1801 the Rev. Joel Foster, A.M., held a pastorate of ten years,—a period not wholly marked by harmony, political and social differences disturbing the unanimity of thought and interests prevailing during Mr. Bridge's pastorate.

A successor to the old church on the Common had become necessary, it having been in use for eighty-nine years. A contest of seven years is said to have been waged as to its location, the question having come up at thirty-four meetings as to which side of the brook the new church should stand. A unanimous vote of the town in 1813 decided the matter, and the present church lot was then deeded to the "Citizens of the town of East Sudbury" by William Wyman.

The frame of the building was raised June 1, 1814, and the new church dedicated, as has been stated, on the 25th of January, 1815.

A contemporary description of the edifice may be of interest:—

This meeting house stands at a short distance from the former; on a rising ground, of easy access. It was located by unanimous vote of the town; a majority who were in favor of rebuilding on or by the same spot, consenting to a proposition of the minority. The dimensions are, length 54 feet, width $51\frac{1}{2}$ feet, height to eaves 30 feet. A handsome projection in front, 34 by 8 feet, is entered by several stone steps, guarded by an iron balustrade. The cupola rises to 110 feet, in which is a good bell, weighing 1019 lbs. Both the exterior and interior display much taste. The architect was Mr. Andrews Palmer of Newburyport, and the cost of the building was about \$9500.

The bell referred to, which is still in use, was cast by Paul Revere & Son, and bears the date 1814.

Before the regrettable architectural changes made in this building in 1850, it was one of the finest examples of the old-time New England village church existing. It consisted of one room, the floor of which was that of the present vestry, and rose to the height of the present ceiling. Galleries ran around three sides, supported by fluted columns, a portion of one of which now serves as a pedestal before the pulpit. The old original pulpit, still in use, and unchanged even to its cushion, formerly stood upon six slender columns high above the floor, and was approached by winding stairs on either side. The pews were the old, so-called "square" pews, with high walls and a door to each.

Inside each pew the seats ran around three sides, for the families of those days could not sit in a seat for five persons, so that half the congregation sat back to the minister. This half was usually the younger children. The seats were all on hinges, to be turned back when the congregation stood up, and when they sat down there was a clattering fusillade of falling seats over all the church. The old wrought-iron hinges are still on all these pews.

In 1850 the building was made two-storied by flooring over the space between the galleries, the pulpit was removed to the basement, another of mahogany veneer substituted, and the window behind it closed up. The old white interior woodwork was "grained" in imitation of hard wood, and the walls elaborately frescoed in imitation of columns, arches, alcoves, and panels. By these changes much of the fine old sincerity of its former workmanship and character was replaced by the sham and pretension of the prevailing taste of the period. It remained thus until 1898, when the old pulpit and window behind it were replaced as far as possible, and the woodwork restored to its original white. Portions of two of its ancient supporting columns were incorporated into the new pulpit base, in their old positions.

The church as designed and built had no chimney, and, like all its predecessors, had no provision for heating other than the foot-stoves in the pews, the coals for which were procured at Captain Thaddeus Russell's house, which stood where the parsonage now is. In 1828, by popular subscription, two stoves were purchased and installed in the front vestibule, the smoke-pipes passing through the church to the present chimney, which was then built upon the outside of the rear wall. These pipes furnished the heat for the building.

With a new meeting-house and a popular young pastor the church was soon restored to its former unity, and so it remained for twelve years. Then, in common with the majority of the First Parishes of the New England towns, it had to face the greatest crisis of its existence.

As is well known, the period about 1825 was a momentous one in the history of our churches. The trend toward the liberal faith had been increasing for some years, in the case of our own church for many years, as will be shown. The adherents of the old theology viewed this with alarm, and bent all their energies to revive the smouldering embers of Calvinism. The Unitarians responded with equal fervor, and in the resulting conflict many of the old churches were

split in twain. Dr. Lyman Beecher was sent to our town, and held a series of meetings in the hall of the "Old Green Store," as Mr. Bullard's house, built out of the timbers of the fourth meeting-house, was called. Here he fiercely denounced the new dispensation, and the young pastor of the First Parish, an early convert to the new faith, met the issue then and there.

The question for the church to answer, and to answer at once, was this: Shall the old Calvinistic theology with its traditional and Biblical basis, identified with this church since its foundation, continue; or shall we, abandoning tenets and dogmas which our God-given reason can no longer in fair justice to itself or to the God who gave it, accept; seek by the new light of intellectual and spiritual enfranchisement, a broader and fuller revelation of God?

The reply was that of nine-tenths of the old New England churches, and a large majority of the parish sustained Mr. Wight in the change from the old Calvinistic to the new Unitarian faith. Eighteen persons, however, fifteen women and three men, withdrew from the church, and founded the present Evangelical Trinitarian Society in Wayland, giving it a name which would leave no doubt as to their theological status.

This change in sentiment of the majority of the First Parish was not, as has been stated, sudden. It had been evident for many years. The growing liberalism of the three predecessors of Mr. Wight is noticeable to a student of the history of this church. Mr. Bridge had even questioned the dogma of the Trinity, and his successor had held equally radical views, thus gradually preparing the way for the climax of Mr. Wight's time. The earlier preaching of the church, as shown in existing sermons, notably those of the Rev. Israel Loring, was, viewed in the light of our own days, horrible. It would be charitable to consider these as the ravings of a madman, and it is highly probable that the development of liberal thought in this church was largely a reaction from such preaching.

Mr. Wight's pastorate lasted formally some twenty

8 - See notes

years, the exact date of its closing being somewhat obscure, but as pastor emeritus in effect it continued all his life. As a citizen, his activities and interests were many and wide. As chairman of the school committee for many years, he left the indelible mark of his progressiveness on that institution, as on the parish. He was blessed with a happy home and family. The old "Parson Wight" homestead is remembered by many of us as standing nearly opposite the present school building on the Cochituate Road, and now, moved to the hilltop behind its old site, exists, enlarged and beautified, as the home of Mr. Arthur B. Nichols.

A daughter of Mr. Wight, as teacher in the Perkins Institution for the Blind under Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, had the special care and teaching of Laura Bridgman, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl, whose wonderful development under Dr. Howe attracted the attention of the world.

Mr. Wight may be said to have been a bibliomaniac. His passion for books was unbounded. In the present town library are several ancient and rare imprints, collected and highly prized by him, indicative of a refined taste and enthusiasm in this interest. On his coming to the town Mr. Wight found the organization of the East Sudbury Social Library existing, but deemed many of its provisions unsatisfactory. Its circulation was limited to the proprietors. He believed that the use of books and access to them should be absolutely free. With this end in view he began a collection of books by subscription, gift, or loan, known as the East Sudbury Charitable Library, which ultimately reached the number of some three hundred volumes. This library, at first kept in his home and afterward in this church, was free to all, the use of it constantly urged and encouraged by him.

This may be called the second stage in the development of the Free Public Library idea in Wayland. Its culmination was soon to be realized. In 1847 President Wayland, of Brown University, interested in Wayland through his friend and classmate, the Hon. Edward Mellen, and by the incident of the identity of name, offered the town the sum

of \$500 for the establishment of a public library, provided the citizens raise by subscription an equal amount. \$534 was immediately subscribed, and Mr. Wayland at once placed his donation in the hands of Judge Mellen.

The matter, coming before the town at town meeting, was referred to a committee, including Mr. Wight and the Rev. Edmund H. Sears, they to report at a subsequent meeting. At this stage a serious difficulty presented itself, greatly retarding the consummation of the library plan. While the fund could be held by the town as a gift or bequest, no authority existed for the maintenance of a library as a branch of the town's administration by taxation. This difficulty was temporarily overcome by the town's making the payment of taxes levied for this purpose optional with the tax-payers. Rules and regulations for the library were adopted May 8, 1848, a room prepared in the town house, now Mr. Lowell's store, and on Aug. 7, 1850, the first books were delivered. The two existing private libraries were merged into the new town institution, as were the school libraries, which, through the activities of Mr. Wight as chairman of the school committee, had been placed in the six school districts of the town.

The final obstruction to the maintenance of the town library was removed by Mr. Wight in 1851, when as representative in the State legislature he drafted and presented a bill authorizing the establishment and maintenance of public libraries by taxation, which bill was passed and signed by the governor May 24, 1851.

Thus was founded and established the first free public library in Massachusetts, and to no one more than to John Burt Wight is credit due; and for this achievement, in his case but one of many affecting the interests of church and state, is he entitled to the grateful memory of the people of this town.

On the 20th of February, 1839, in this building was ordained to the Christian ministry the man whose name appears last in date upon our tablet, the ninth pastor of this church.

If as the town of his ordination, his home after marriage, the birthplace of his three sons, pastorate of eighteen years, scene of the celebration of his silver wedding, and where the greater part of his literary work, now household words over all the world, was done,—if these give Wayland a right to claim a large share in the life of Edmund Hamilton Sears as her own, she has this right.

A modest, retiring, even shy young man he appeared on that eventful day of his ordination and settlement as pastor. His friend and classmate, the Rev. Henry W. Bellows, thus describes his appearance as a youth:—

His was a proud modesty and frank reserve, with a face half oriental, half aboriginal, in its dark eyes, high cheek-bones, and tawny complexion, mingled with New England features.

A quiet, reserved student, shrinking instinctively from contact with the sordid, practical, unlovely things of life, he appeared and was, but there was a light in his eye, a toss back of the head, a grimness of that New England mouth, which indicated the invincible strength, and iron determination of the fighter to the death, if need be.

He was a Berkshire lad, descended from the Plymouth pilgrims, an incarnation of the best New England traditions and character, as exemplified in so many of his mighty contemporaries in that wonderful flowering time of literature and thought. Among these honored names, history has placed that of the shy, farm-bred, sensitive young college graduate who was ordained here that day.

He was a graduate of Union College, which later conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and of the Harvard Divinity School of the class of 1837.

Mr. Wight's successor, the Rev. Richard T. Austin, after

a pastorate of two years was obliged to resign on account of ill-health, and it was on a Sunday in 1838, when Mr. Sears had been sent as a supply to fill Mr. Austin's place, that he first saw Wayland. Charmed with the personality and powers of the young preacher, he was at once invited by the parish to become its pastor. In reviewing his life in after-years, he said:—

At the time of the graduation of my class at the Divinity School, many of my classmates sought metropolitan positions, and some have become famous. I never had this ambition. My ideal of a pastor's life was that described by Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village," and the quiet beauty of Wayland with its sylvan life and little parish drew me strongly.

A few months of the new pastorate passed by happily and auspiciously for pastor and people, when good old Deacon Draper, afterwards his dear friend and neighbor, one day said to him, "There is only one thing lacking,—a wife!" The young man flushed consciously. The thought was not new to him. Only his own modesty and self-depreciation had prevented this consummation. His mind had often gone back to Barnstable, where in 1837, as a young divinity student preaching in that beautiful old town, he had passed some Sundays at the house of one of its foremost citizens. There a sweet young daughter of his host had seemed to him the one white rose of girlhood. And this white rose, Ellen Bacon, on Nov. 7, 1839, was transplanted to Wayland, there for many years to bloom, and shed over all the beauty and fragrance of her sweet and noble personality.

Mr. and Mrs. Sears's first home in Wayland was a half of the cottage on the Old Sudbury Road, afterwards the home for many years of Lydia Maria Child. But this was not long to continue. So shining a light in his calling as young Sears soon became could not long remain hidden in Wayland. A year later came a call from the large and opulent parish of Lancaster, Massachusetts. The ideal of Goldsmith's village pastor had become much modified, viewed in the light of matrimony. The young pastor had not now only

himself to consider. He had an idolized wife, for whom the necessary privations of a small parish were intolerable, desiring as he did to lay at her feet all that life and opportunity could offer.

So in 1840 Mr. Sears accepted the call from the Lancaster church, where six happy years were passed. Never did pastor and wife find more devoted and appreciative friends. The culture, refinement, and intellectual tastes of this grand old New England town were keenly appreciated and reciprocated by the brilliant young pastor and wife. This intercourse, to which were added the joys of a happy home and family, a daughter being born in 1843, continued until the failing health of Mr. Sears brought it to a close. Never robust, the strain of social and pastoral demands of a large parish proved too much for his delicate and sensitive organization of mind and body, and serious illness followed. Quiet and seclusion were insisted upon by his physician, and in search of these Mr. Sears's memory went longingly back to the quiet life of the little village by the wide green meadows,—his first pastorate,—and hither he returned in 1847.

The restful life of a year's retirement so restored his health and strength as to enable him to resume the duties of pastor of the Wayland church the following year, and as such he remained for seventeen years.

During this time was done the greater part of Mr. Sears's life's work. With a small but congenial and appreciative parish, making no great demand upon his time and strength, he was able to devote his mind largely to literary work. Living upon a small farm on the Plain Road, the buildings since destroyed by fire, he cultivated a garden, kept a few hens and a cow, and, alternating this with literary work, was enabled to so conserve his powers of body and mind as to keep both in useful service.

His first book, "Regeneration," was published in 1853, followed by his "Pictures of the Olden Time, as shown in the Fortunes of a Family of the Pilgrims," in 1857. The following year he published his "Athanasia, or Foregleams of

Immortality." These religious works and his later publication, "The Fourth Gospel the Heart of Christ," largely written at this time, have powerfully affected modern religious thought and have placed Mr. Sears among the great architects of the Unitarian faith.

His "Pictures of the Olden Time," a delightful historical romance based upon the fortunes of his own pilgrim ancestors, makes us regret that Mr. Sears did not do more in this province of literature.

At this time he was also an editor of the *Literary and Religious Magazine*, and, not unmindful of his civic obligations, did faithful and valuable work as a member of the School and Library Committees of the town.

A poet, a mystic, a dreamer of fair ideals, the world of spirit and imagination was as real to him as the things of the tangible material world. Driving his cow over the pasture path, his eyes fixed on the gold and violet of the sunset clouds, the brush of an angel's wing against his cheek would seem but natural to him. It was at this time, in 1852, that he wrote one of his two great Christmas hymns, the one beginning

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,"

the other, "Calm on the listening ear of night," having been written when a student in the Divinity School. These hymns, sung now wherever the Christian religion is known, by churches of every creed and denomination, are enough of themselves to perpetuate Mr. Sears's name for all time.

The hymn, "It came upon the midnight clear," was written for a Christmas service in this church, and was first printed on leaflets by Mr. Sears and distributed among his parishioners. Shut in between the leaves of some old Bible or in some long unused drawer or closet of the Wayland homesteads, may not one of these leaflets, yellowed by age, still be found?

Of this hymn one stanza is an epitome of Mr. Sears's religious faith, an expression of his very spiritual life:—



PULPIT IN WAYLAND CHURCH

"Still through the cloven skies they come,
 With peaceful wings unfurled,
 And still their heavenly music floats
 O'er all this weary world.
 Above its sad and lowly plains
 They bend on hovering wing,
 And ever o'er its Babel sounds
 The blessed angels sing."

The mystical, poetic side of Mr. Sears's nature has been fully dwelt upon by his biographers. There was, however, another side to his character, which has not been equally emphasized, a recognition of which is certainly necessary to complete the full picture of the man. The steady eye and the firm mouth of the youth were not without significance. An absolute fearlessness and inflexible will were there. His friend, Rev. Chandler Robbins, said of him,—

No human power could draw or drive him one hair's-breadth from the stand of principle or the line of right. To attempt this was like dashing one's hand against a rock.

As Edmond Browne had been the minister of this church in the Indian wars, and Josiah Bridge the minister of the Revolution, so Dr. Sears was its pastor throughout the Civil War. And in the momentous years preceding the deluging of our country with blood in the latter conflict, his voice was raised, like that of a prophet of old, and these walls have rung to it, as knowing neither fear nor favor, with absolutely terrific eloquence he denounced the evils of the times and predicted the woes to come. "I do not often turn aside," he said, "from the usual offices of this place and hour, but I do not forget that we are citizens and have duties to the times and the country we live in. Vice prevails, and impious men hold sway!"

Concerning slavery he says:—

The moral question of slavery has been argued mainly as it affects the rights of the negro. I submit it to you that that is not the paramount issue. The most important question is not how it affects the black man, but how it affects the white man.

On the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law he denounced it from this pulpit in scathing words, and, regardless of the opposition it at once excited, repeated the denunciation in yet stronger terms after seeing Anthony Burns, the escaped slave, carried in chains down State Street by United States marshals for no crime but the attempt to be a free man. After the assault on Charles Sumner on the floor of the United States Senate, Mr. Sears reached the culmination of invective in his great sermon "Revolution or Reform" preached in this room, Sunday, June 15, 1856. This address, immediately printed and sent broadcast throughout the country, consists of fourteen pages of the most eloquent and impassioned denunciation and prophecy to be found in the literature of the time.

In this he uses the word "revolution," prophesying "civil war." This, he says,

is God's remedy, when a people are past reform and need punishment. It is the cup of the Divine anger; when chasms yawn everywhere; brother is set against brother; the business of life is at an end; the human heart runs gall; and no man knows but the ground will open under his feet the next moment. . . . It is not likely that God will throw away three hundred years of history; it is not likely that a resurgent barbarism will bear us back to the middle ages. But it comes to that, if the encroaching and brutal oligarchy of slavery is to be fixed finally upon our necks; and freedom, and light, and education, and thriving industry, and art, and science, and letters and invention, and Christianity itself, must go down before it. National retribution must follow national crime persevered in and unrepented of. And it (civil war) may come as a reward for all our servility and compromises with wrong; because we have joined hands with oppression; because we have hunted the poor man and the unprotected woman through our streets and fields; because we have put wicked men in high places to promote selfish interests, sacrificing justice to trade and humanity to commerce. . . . Every time we have dallied with the slave power we have sown the wind, and every year it becomes more certain that we shall reap the whirlwind!

How this prophecy was fulfilled Mr. Sears lived to see, and history has recorded in letters of blood.

In 1865 Mr. Sears tendered his resignation as pastor of this church, with the intention of devoting himself wholly

to literary work. A year later he was, however, induced to accept the pastorate of the Weston church, as associate with the venerable Dr. Field, who, after a pastorate of fifty years, had practically relinquished active duties, and here Dr. Sears continued as pastor until his death ten years later, in 1876.

My task is done, if I have demonstrated that the memory of the lives of these men is worthy of perpetuation by this church. And, if so, we dedicate this tablet to-day to the glory of God and in grateful and loving memory of

EDMOND BROWNE. First minister of this church. Pioneer. Bearer of culture and refined tastes into the wilderness. Strong man among strong men. Defender of women and children against Indian atrocities. Sagacious counsellor.

JOSIAH BRIDGE. Minister of the Revolution. Representative old-time pastor. Holder of the longest pastorate of this church. Man of distinguished personality. Eminent citizen. Early advocate of modern civic institutions.

JOHN BURT WIGHT. First Unitarian minister. In youth zealous, enthusiastic leader in advanced thought. In age an honored sage and patriarch of the community. Lover of books and upbuilder of our library.

EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS. Scholar, man of letters, poet. Of rare spiritual insight, a leader in the liberal faith. Author of hymns which as sources of joy and inspiration are household words throughout the Christian world. Champion of the oppressed and denouncer of national wrong.

And this we do that the names of these men may not be lost to coming generations.

Notes

1, page 12 -

In the woods at the rear of the North Cemetery, now comprised in it, are three rude, flat, unlettered stones lying side by side, *with a fourth at a short distance*. It is surmised that these may be graves of an earlier date than any by the site of the first church. Tradition holds this wooded tract to be an ancient Indian burying ground. It is certain that several skeletons have been exhumed here.

2, page 15 -

The Bridle Point road from this point crossed the meadow and swamp before these houses to the old Bow Road, near the present Parmenter house. This estate, allotted to John Parmenter in 1639, has descended from father to son in the family to the present time, a deed never having been recorded. John Parmenter here

maintained the first tavern, or "ordinary" as it was called, in the town, the site being a few rods to the west of the present house. This tavern was maintained for over 150 years.

3, page 17 -

To quote the old record - "On the next day in the morning, as soon as it was light, we went to look for the Concord men who were slain on the River meadow, and there we went into water up to our knees, where we found five and we brought them in canoes and buried them at the bridge's foot." This spot is now marked by a granite monument, placed there by the Wayside Inn chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1908.

4, page 17 -

The East Side being cleared of Indians an effort was made by the English to effect a relief to Wadsworth, the sound of the battle on Green Hill having been heard all the morning. This was unsuccessful, an overwhelming force of Indians confronting them on the "Old Lancaster Road", between Green and Goodman's hills, causing their flight to the Goodenow garrison, near the present East Sudbury rail road station.

5, page 20 -

In the lay-out of the town in 1640 a tract of some nine acres was reserved as a Training Field. This was situated on the present Patterson and Drew estates, and a portion of it still exists in the triangular common between the three roads then. The training field was sold by the town in 1804.

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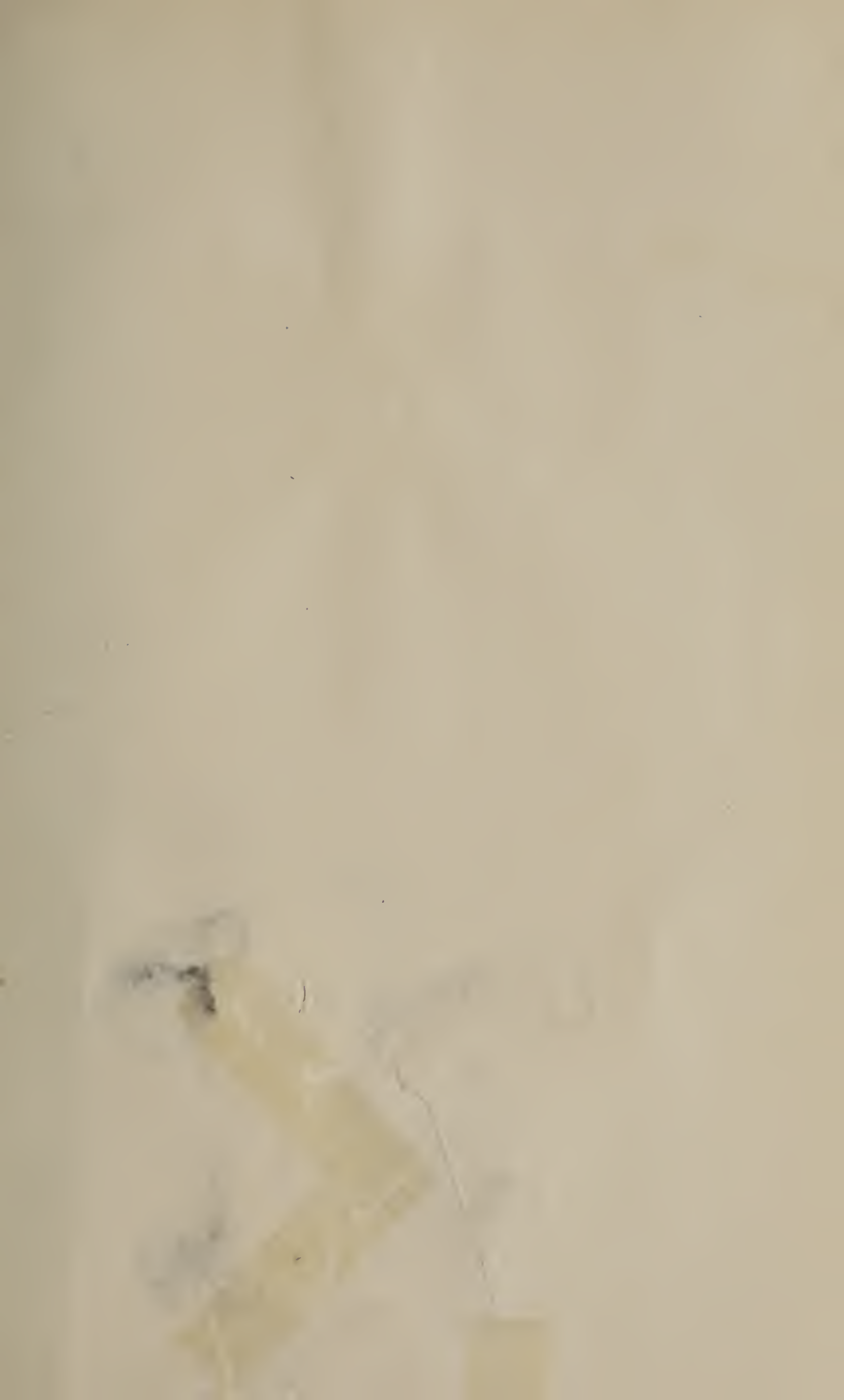
The old Common comprised the land lying between the present Lowell House and the State Road, extending back to the brick school-house, now a dwelling house. It was sold by the town in 1825 to Deacon James Draper and by him cut up into house lots.

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A condition of the sale of the old Church on the Common in 1815 to Luther Glezen and Jonathan Heard was that the new building to be constructed by them out of the old material should contain a hall suitable for town meetings, which should be maintained for twenty-five years. This hall still exists, unchanged in form, in the building, now Mr. Bullard's residence. The west door of this house is one of the doors from the old church, and two columns are to be seen in the lower hall, removed from it.

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The Rev. Wm.Cook and Rev. Joel Foster were even more pronounced in this respect than Mr.Bridge, Mr.Foster antagonizing a portion of his congregation.



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